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MACMILLAN

Editorial

STAND was begun, in 1952, because I felt then, as now, that I lived in a society marked by its casual indifference to the individual and his suffering. This is a limited area of concern, but it is an important one because the concern is germinal, in the sense that pre-occupation with individual suffering is the beginning of moral growth. So in its re-emergence, the magazine will continue to speak of the individual in all the contexts of his weaknesses and strengths, hating and loving what he will not escape from – an involvement with his fellow man; the realizing of which means sharing, truly, compassionately, the predicament of another. A facile orthodoxy of language and a wish to be entirely original, both are insensitive; both evade the responsibilities of the writer. But the desire to create values, where there are none – this is something different.

To some this pre-occupation with values may imply an incomplete concern with writing. There is a simple reply. Unless we concern ourselves with what is valuable, sane, and compassionate, in our society, there may soon be no society for literature to flourish in.

Values are almost ineluctable today, and where they seem to exist, difficult to formulate. Like children pulling at what may be salvaged from the destroyed city, we must be content to save what is valuable in a society that *seems* to be disintegrating. As I see it, literature is an instrument capable of helping salvage – it is not, in the present context, something magical, something possessing properties intrinsically valuable. And if the image of the destroyed city and its children seems too apocalyptic of European society, I say that only by regarding our society as disintegrating, morally, can we have the humility necessary to salvage what we need for future survival. It is no longer a case of disciplining what is left into the semblances of order, or even of formalizing the relationships between the work and the reader, which, I imagine, is what some of us think can be done, but of rescuing what we need for possible reconstruction in the future. To formalize the relationships, to discipline the attenuated passion of our writers in forms that belonged to another era is unintelligent, and untruthful, because it will obscure what is happening to human beings today. Forms and disciplines exist only in the sense that they are organic to the passions people find when confronted with their situation.

This journal helps reflect the gathering stage of its society, and hopes one day to participate in its reconstruction.

In the meantime, something of our position is articulated, I think, in Rudolf Nassauer's novel, 'The Hooligan,' a chapter of which is printed in this issue of STAND. In Nassauer's novel, the idea of absolute good attained by using up the evil in us is the rationale of the central character, the anti-hero. Such a belief, or rationalization, brings about his self-destruction, but not before he has in fact caused the suffering of, and done away with, many. These were victims through accidents of birth and geography; he is his own victim, snared in his obsession. The moral qualifications pointed against this central figure, *appear* neutralized in such a situation. The murderer believes in the purity of his motives as much as, if not more than, his victims believe in their innocence and the poignancy

of their agony. At this point, we are forced to question the validity of the beliefs we hold, for if our world bears the remotest approximation to the created situation in the novel, a corresponding confusion of values seems to exist; we must start again.

For some the victim is seen in focus most sharply in the context of the concentration camp. The renewal of swastika daubing, in Germany and elsewhere, indicates that such a context is characteristically part of the European infection, and a concern with it is therefore germane to this magazine.

Origins

*Spirits united to-day and to-morrow dispersed
To places forgetting one place where the wind and the cloud
Conspired with the waterfall's thunder and found it accursed
If the peak of its bondage was proud:*

*May you speak with a tongue that learns only from love what it knows.
May your strength be the strength of wild eagles, and my the blind shock
Of the elements warring create in you joy and repose.
May you honour the heart of the rock.*

*For we came out of silence and back into silence return.
We were stripped for the elements' fury; by them we were dressed.
First they mocked us, but then we grew stronger and mocked them in turn,
In the heart of the whirlwind found rest.*

*We took refuge in caves of our daybreak. The flint and the knife
Preserved us from want and from peril. A mountainous sea,
Ice, famine, or battle, predicted the end of all life;
But from horror we shook ourselves free.*

*As the night of those ages gave birth to a desolate day
We protected our flocks; where the tiger, the wolf and the boar
Besieged our survival, we killed them, and killed birds of prey:
So we nourished our life at death's door.*

*Yet nothing we knew in that rock of a soul that would climb,
Of a Christ that would save us, contracting all heaven in a span.
Compassion was silent. The reticent forces of rhyme
Lay still on the slumber of man.*

*What numberless ages of anguish were sifted like sand!
What yearning and ache of the loins, while an offspring of hate
Flung babes to the furnace, until the true veins of the hand
Through the prophets transfigured the state:*

*Then at last man encountered himself, his Accuser and end.
He saw his own Hell and the labouring lusts that destroy;
And Jerusalem showed him the pastures where friend dies for friend
And the end of all labour is joy.*

(from 'Revisited Waters')

The Wasps

A chapter from a novel called 'THE HOOLIGAN'

It was the beginning of the mud-period of winter, and for many days now the paths between the barracks had been a filthy slushy mess. The sun during the shortening days was trying all the time to burst the bags of cloud. Every now and again it succeeded, and its brilliant rays about the cloud-heads looked like tiaras.

For many days now, thuds of shellfire and bomb-bursts in the distance had grown nearer, or they had grown nearer and then further away, or they would be heard all the time and then, suddenly, they would be heard no more. For many days now, the prisoners had grown excited at these noises, imagining the explosions to be the shellfire of a liberating army. And then again the prisoners would grow suddenly frightened, fearing that if a liberating army were approaching, they would quickly be liquidated and all traces of the camp be eliminated. When either the excitement of hope or fear became too great, the prisoners would recede into their normal apathy, to be once more concerned only with their bodies, which compelled them to jettison any other interest which for one moment might have engaged their minds.

Piercing the October dawn a voice coming through the loudspeakers summoned all prisoners to the parade ground. It took little time for the huts to be opened up and for the first prisoners to appear, silhouetted against the silver air. But though the prisoners obeyed immediately, it took them the best part of an hour to totter to the parade ground, bringing along their dead, and to fall into an irregular formation on the stinking, slushy square.

Every morning for years now it was the same for those who had survived the night. First the gruelling noise of a siren, and then the voice over the microphone summoning the prisoners to parade. To-day, though, was different. Usually there was only the voice, and the fear that somewhere, from behind gun-sites, eye-slits followed the prisoners' every move. But to-day the guards were in the open, moving about the square. Andreas too. He was walking at Kretschmar's side, in deep discussion, until Kretschmar mounted the raised dais to watch this travesty of militarism, the stinking prisoners lined up in formation. All the camp guards were about, hurrying up the prisoners, and though trying very hard to achieve this by all kinds of means, their efforts bore little result. For the prisoners were simply a silent mass of men, bodies simply, and confused souls, whom dawn did not in any way awaken from the slumber of constant exhaustion. Neither did dawn swell their hearts with hope, except the hearts of the dying. In the brains of dying men, memories suddenly began to explode; a few hours, sometimes a few days even before their death, they would quickly begin to re-live parts of their past. Their

behaviour would suddenly grow strange. As soon as they knew their time was up, they would cease to act in the dreadful selfish manner which they had acquired in order to survive, and once more became the generous, selfish, stupid, clever, good or bad persons they had once been when they had been free. As they moved towards their death, they would try to partake once more of some sensual pleasures of life. Especially they would go once more through the motions of eating and excreting. Sometimes, with quite hilarious expressions on their faces, they would simply lie down when they could go no further, heedless of the cold or the sharp-edged stones piercing the taut skin of their shrivelled bodies, and simply wait for the death rattle to blow the last breath from their bodies. The dying, the uncaring dying, were the only cheerful ones amongst the prisoners, and by their strange cheerfulness they were immediately detected by their comrades, who would at once start fighting for their miserable chattels.

Kretschmar stood patiently upon the dais, watching his guards gather the prisoners into formation. This might be the last 'experiment,' he thought, for he knew the enemy had crossed the frontier, and was fighting its way towards the heart of the country. Without taking his eyes off the vast mass of prisoners, he whispered to Andreas who was standing on the ground beside him: "At least, sweet boy, at least we shall go down in history!"

Andreas smiled benevolently at Kretschmar, a master at his pupil. "Though at first they'll be outraged, terribly terribly grieved," Kretschmar mocked, "at what we've done to these stinking beasts here. But later, later, sweet boy,—when we become history—they will realise, when they live in a world paradisial with love, that that love can only exist because we went to the very depths of degradation in order to exhaust man's terrible craving for cruelty. Oh then man will become a glorious creature," he said, raising his voice, almost chanting the words, "full of love and benevolence for one another, but only because we were the people who looked upon cruelty as being of equal importance to any other function of lust."

"Quite so, Kretschmar," said Andreas, nodding his head. He did not want to talk. He was already possessed by the experiment about to take place, within earshot of shells and bombs rending the air,—the experiment with the white hut.

A short while ago Kretschmar had read an article in some scientific journal which had discussed the importance of colour in food. The author had maintained that colour was an absolutely essential part of nutrition, and he had put forward the theory that if men were given colourless food for even a short while, they would die of starvation. A chart accompanying the article had given the exact period of endurance of the animals which had been subjected to this interesting experiment, as well as the colours which had most readily revived them. White (the scientist had explained, was the base negative colour, and he had therefore shut the rats into white cages, and had dyed white the food served to them during his experiment.

For days after this article, Kretschmar had behaved in a most curious manner. It had not immediately occurred to him to try out this fascinating experiment on some of the prisoners. He would never accept that his ideas, the ones, that is, which enriched his life in a very deep sense, arose from anyone else's imagination. If they did, he discounted their source without any effort, for he believed that his ideas arose directly from inspir-

ation. For days he would wander about without a clear thought in his mind. But somehow he was feeling that many thoughts were trying to break through to clarity.

"I've got growing pains!" he used jovially to tell his guards, and they would pass the word round, making sure that somehow it reached the prisoners, who would thereafter live in fear of the outcome of Kretschmar's mood. Many suicides occurred in the camp during these periods of anticipation, and Kretschmar, too, grew terribly impatient while waiting for inspiration to produce the idea arising out of his strange mood. He would grow miserable and ill-tempered, and in order to boycott his childish impatience, he would organise the wildest carouses. Rumours of these reached even the inhabitants of Goeringen, whence he had girls especially brought to the camp for these orgies.

"It's a marvellous idea," he had told Andreas when the idea had finally gripped him. "We'll clear one of the prisoners' huts and make them paint it white; we'll make them get it ready for our little experiment." He had giggled at this little twist of thought, the sheer delight in cruelty which had prompted him to suggest using the prisoners to prepare for their own torture. "Did not Christ have to carry his own cross? A delightful detail, I've always thought."

Later he had grown serious; the reason behind his tortures was always a serious one. "Slowly to drain life out of a man," he had told Andreas, "to hear him fight for it, to see him fight for it, above all, though, to *hear* him fight for it, not with the voice that emanates from his throat, but from his stomach: to hear a man, whilst he can still speak sensibly, renounce everything for the sake of life, everything he possesses, everyone he has ever loved, simply for a miserable crust of bread which will enable him to stay alive, perhaps only for a second longer. That lust for life, so terrifyingly expressed by a man raving with hunger, is the spring of the clock of life." He had been quite elated by these words, staring upwards into the evening sky blistered with pus-coloured clouds, as they were ambling through the neat gardens surrounding the official quarters. And then, suddenly, looking down to the ground and staring nowhere, somehow giving expression to an unruly inner discipline, he started off boisterously: "My growing pains lasted ten days this time. One hundred and sixty-eight suicides. Quite incredible. It's ten days since I read that article about the rats, and straight away the idea must have dawned on me. But only now do I feel ready to carry out my plan. It is wonderful," he said, bracing himself up on the hilltop ground, viewing the vast pit where the huts stood, breathing and talking slowly: "to feel oneself grow fearless and formidable. Yes, that's indeed one of our aims. To become fearless and formidable, to feel oneself arise a new man, or something like that. It's part of our Party manifesto, I believe. Do you know that the whole idea of growth, of being,—the whole idea of *growing* is contained in that marvellous phrase? Take those whores from Goeringen we had here the other night. Did you see the one I had, the blonde, with her painted face, the one with that fat stinking body, with rings of fat overflowing the floodgates of her corset? Eh? Ha, did you notice her? You noticed her, you must have done. She was the ugliest whore we had here, the ugliest whore I've ever seen in my life. I took her, and right in front of everybody, too, on that nice soft couch. I did that to prove myself a man. There was a time I couldn't take women, though I wanted women. They

made me feel self-conscious. When I was with a woman, she made me think all the time, not about myself, but about her. That's what happens when you grow self-conscious with a woman: you consider only *her* all the time. And nothing ever happened. And then, one day, when I was with a woman, I don't remember why or how it came about,—I suddenly thought of things that had always brought about my pleasure. It was simply doing what you had always done with yourself with somebody else. And lately, sweet boy . . ." he said to Andreas, as if age and affection would, for a moment, lend him exquisite tenderness, "... lately I've had difficulty with my dreams. They haven't come so easily. I'm borde with my dreams. They're worn out, I suppose. I started to get afraid. At forty I surely have another twenty years to go? Take the ugliest whore, Kretschmar, I said, and prove to yourself you're not dry. And so I did. I did, sweet boy. It's women a man wants, not one woman, but all women, all the females in the world. And what's so funny is that they are all contained in a man when he's born, only he has to grow fearless and formidable, so as not to be self-conscious about it."

Whenever Kretschmar revealed to Andreas some innermost part of his life, he dried up after the telling, he became bashful and shy, withdrawn. Though he had wanted to say much more, he had suddenly stopped, and the boyish expression on his face showed considerable annoyance at having so unwittingly exposed himself to judgment. He half closed his eyes, looked straight at Andreas, assumed an air of fearless ruthlessness, in order to ward off even one word of judgment.

"But why have I told you all this?" he asked, though the resentment in his voice did not call for an answer.

The roll of the guns in the distance had made Kretschmar excited, and he burst out with a command for silence. The guards stopped the long and wearisome roll-call. The prisoners' murmurs died slowly. There were one or two strange shrieks, odd movements of commotion, which Kretschmar did not really notice.

"Let's have some of that funny P.T.," Kretschmar ordered one of the guards. Andreas smiled, watching Kretschmar's toes press hard against the soft leather of his boots, and his hands stiffen with excitement. The guard obediently started off the prisoners on an exhausting exercise, making them fall flat on the slushy ground and rise again quickly.

"See that their stinking smutty noses touch the ground!" Kretschmar shouted to the guards, his face hilarious.

At first the prisoners obeyed slowly, but when the guards went round with their whips and clubs, things began happening a little faster, more rhythmically. They slumped down on the mud, and tried their best to rise again quickly to avoid whip-lashes, and to face the hilarious commandant and his grinning accomplices.

"They'll be nice and tired after this," Kretschmar said to Andreas. He ordered the guards to stop the exercise and the mud-covered prisoners came to a slack standstill. He then made his announcement that there would be no food that day, because a prisoner had tried to escape. The prisoners did not stir when they heard his words, and taking this as a sign of defiance, Kretschmar shouted at them:

"And don't you dare believe that it is a lie that one of your stinking comrades tried to escape our clutches during the night. But we caught him, and just to put you off trying to follow his example, we'll make you

squirm a little with hunger. And one more thing. The guns, those guns you can hear in the distance when you've washed your filthy ears : it has been reported to me that some of you are spreading the rumour that those are enemy guns. I'm not a spoil-sport, but I must spoil that little game of your imagination. Those guns belong to us; they are the guns of our army on field manoeuvres. So don't imagine that our supplies have been cut off, and that there is no food. This is not the end," he said, still addressing the prisoners, but looking at Andreas, smiling and clapping his hands, " this is merely the beginning."

The prisoners had been completely mystified by Kretschmar's words. They were still panting after their laborious exercise, and on many, it seemed, Kretschmar's words had not registered properly. At least, there was at first a stunned silence, though a few moments later there were loud murmurs and groans from the prisoners' columns. Their protest did not rise to anything further. Suddenly, though, there was a disturbance among the ranks. From about the third row from the front, a filthy dishevelled figure of a man broke loose, whining and shouting and singing all at once. He threw his arms about in irregular gestures, and looked sharply from side to side, watching his legs move from back to front at every step. In this ridiculous fashion, and much to the amusement of the guards and also of the prisoners, he walked towards Kretschmar. When he arrived at the dais, there was a sudden silence whilst everybody waited to see what was going to happen. Still he continued with his peculiar gestures, until for a moment he stood quite still, bowed deeply before the commandant, and in a chanting voice said :

" I am, I am really terribly, terribly sorry, commandant, but I have to leave now, I have to go home."

Kretschmar was delighted. Through the microphone, which he had used to address the prisoners, he said :

" The gentleman wants to go home. We are terribly sorry to have detained your, sir."

The prisoner, hearing these words, turned round once more and waved at Kretschmar, or rather, he made a gesture with his hand as if to say it was quite all right.

" Guards !" Kretschmar shouted out in a commanding voice. " Open the gates for the gentleman. He wants to go home."

Grinning guards opened the gate towards which the prisoner was walking in his peculiar fashion, still throwing his arms about and watching the movement of his slow-moving legs. In this ludicrous manner it would take him about four minutes to reach the gate, and all the time the laughter from the guards and the prisoners grew louder. The whole camp was in an uproar, the laughter was contagious, all eyes were on this ridiculous prisoner. When he reached the gate, and just as he was walking out of the camp and everyone was laughing and yelping with some kind of delight, Kretschmar fired his revolver several times, the man fell dead to the ground, and once more there was silence.

On the third day of the 'fast,' as surviving prisoners had later termed the experiment, Kretschmar had ordered the guards to select two hundred

men, "the ones," he had particularly requested, "who can still stand up on their feet"

He had these men gathered up in front of the white hut. They stood there open-mouthed, their noisy breathing half a whistle, half a rattle. Their arms hung loosely from their forward-drooping shoulders. This slack poise somehow suggested that those arms weren't needed any more; if only they would drop off so that they would no longer feed on the tiny store of energy left in the prisoners.

Reubenovitz was sitting on the ground and talking to a man who was peculiarly puffed up with hunger. This obese man was lying against the wall of the latrine. His ragged clothes left him half naked.

"Some time ago, two winters ago, we had a lot of snow, two yards high in places," said Reubenovitz. "There was a prisoner, a notable teacher of Latin, a tall thin man, with a beautiful head. He had deep-set eyes, which gave the expression of his face an air of remoteness, as if his mind were always engaged on matters of the distant past." Reubenovitz, though talking to his companion lying by the wall of the latrine, was staring all the time at the selected prisoners lined up in front of the white hut. He spoke in a quiet tone, with a strange lilt in his intonation, as if all the words he ever spoke were part of an interminable song.

"This professor arrived at the height of that terrible winter, and, owing to some kind of joke or oversight, they kept him standing in the open all night, without food, in the freezing air. By morning his feet were quite purple. He was taken straight to the medical block, whence they brought him a few hours later to our hut. They had amputated his feet. I stood near his bunk, waiting for him to wake up, and somehow wanting to be near him during the terrible struggle in his head which would ensue when he woke. When he eventually opened his feverish eyes, he immediately broke into a smile. O yes, he knew, he said, that they had cut off his feet.

But he did not complain. He talked a great deal, about his two little daughters, his pupils, his library, and his hobby, which was collecting wild flowers which he would then dip into a thin lotion of wax which preserved them, at any rate for as long, he had joked, as he had lived to look at them.

We slept very heavily during those cold days, and one morning I woke up to find his bunk empty. It wasn't long before someone who had been to the latrine told us that he had found the professor outside in the snow, and that the guards had taken him to the medical hut. Apparently, he had stumbled out in the night and fallen down in the snow. This time they had to amputate his legs right up to the groin, and the guards who brought him back said he had now been cured of attempting any more 'nocturnal escapades.' The doctor was rather proud of his operation, and he came every day to have a look at the professor, and every time the professor complained of terrible pains in his arms; he could hardly move his arms, he told the doctor, he could stick a pin into them, they were quite numb. They too, he maintained, showing his white silken-skinned arms, were frozen. They too, he insisted, must come off. In the end the doctor agreed, though we all knew, the doctor as well, that the professor had lied. There was only the torso and the head left of the professor, and under the conditions in which we lived we knew he could not live long. He died a few days later, full of a sense of achievement. He told me, as he was dying, that he had enjoyed his life to the very end, and that even now he

was passing on, he was eagerly looking forward to the experience of death, which would end his life. He was above all, and this I found strange to understand, deeply satisfied by his 'victory' as he had called it. He said that he had always believed that man, to become content, must learn to rot through work, he must bring about his own destruction, leave nothing to chance, to idle chance. 'Let a man die at the end of his days,'—these virtually were his last words,—let him climb on to his bed and lie down between cool starched white sheets, and die.' It is the arms of those prisoners over there that have brought the incident back to my mind, and for the first time I understand what my friend had described."

A sudden cramp in the stomach made Reubenovitz cry out, he gripped his stomach and then vomited gushes of watery slime. He felt himself grow white and sick. For a moment he became terribly hot and then again cold and stiff with pain. The puffed-up man at his feet witnessed Reubenovitz's attack without taking further notice. He refused even to attempt to muster the strength to get up and help his companion in any way.

Reubenovitz thought, 'I am near death myself and therefore I can understand the professor.' But a moment later the cramp ceased and Reubenovitz smiled at his terrible fear of a moment before. He found strength in this smile, and hope in the thought that he had to discipline himself a great deal more in the future, to come to terms with himself,—for his thoughts, he maintained, moved in the right direction,—before he could die. Just then he heard Andreas command the selected prisoners to march into the white hut, where they would be given food.

Kretschmar was standing by the door of the hut, grinning at the prisoners as they suddenly mustered all their strength to rush towards the hut. Most of the two hundred or so were quite silent, their thoughts already engaged on the food they were about to receive. Some though, whistled as they went in, some even smiled at Kretschmar who stood there, a ludicrous figure next to Andreas, waving a white handkerchief at them which from time to time he put into his mouth to subdue his fits of giggling. Those whistling and happy-looking prisoners gave the whole scene an air of profound serenity. They seemed to wish to express great gladness that they had been made to suffer, after which suffering was now to come the joy of release. They went into the hut the inside of which was absolutely white. Everything visible was white, there was no relief of any other colour. The prisoners were given long white gowns to put on (Kretschmar also put on one of these shroud-like garments when he came inside the hut to watch the proceedings), and white gloves. The large hut had been partitioned off into two hundred tiny cubicles in each of which was a very comfortable white leather chair, a little white table, white carpet, and a very bright white light. Each prisoner was directed to one of these cubicles, was asked to sit down in front of the table laid ready with white cutlery for a meal. Food was brought to each prisoner by white-clad guards. The food had been dyed white, and had not been flavoured. Each man was given large quantities of this food, as much as he liked; they brought each man in the windowless hut enough food for five ravenous men, and they gulped down this repast and when they kept on asking for more, they were brought more, as much as they liked. They ate for one whole hour, the muscles of their jaws became exhausted with chewing, they became sick of eating, blown up, and they left their little tables more

hungry even than when they had started. Many, when the signal was given that they 'could go now to lie in the sun to digest their lovely meal' as Kretschmar had put it, rushed out of the building like tigers set free from a cage. They picked up stones from the filthy ground and tried to eat them. One man swallowed quite a number of these stones, which in a few hours blocked the exit of his stomach, so that his stomach burst. They fought over possession of some miserable shrubs which had somehow grown in this abject place, and which the authorities had left standing only because they in no way detracted from the drabness of their surroundings. They tried to eat them, though their teeth broke before the wood became soft enough through chewing. That night several of these ravenous prisoners,—they left trails of white vomit wherever they went—stole out of their huts, and dug up the new graves of their comrades. In the morning, corpses were lying about on the raw earth, with toothmarks clearly visible, and bits of stinking flesh bitten off.

Reubenovitz, on the fourth day of the 'fast,' came once more to the obese man lying by the latrine. The latter had refused to come into the hut the night before, and in the morning he was still lying in the same position, so that Reubenovitz thought at first the man was dead. But as he came nearer he saw the man slowly train his pupils on him. His eyes were very tranquil, and he began to smile. For the first time, hearing the buzz of insects in the still morning air, Reubenovitz noticed that near the man's head and outstretched arm there was a tiny hole in the wall, where some wasps had made a nest.

Those wasps fascinated Reubenovitz. Wasps, which, like bees, he associated with flowers and wide open, heather-covered moors, of all places in this putrid pit of hell! There was something miraculous about their presence at Wallhausen, this nest in the crumbling wall of the stinking latrine.

Reubenovitz went close to the puffed-up man who in a very faint but clear and tranquil voice began to speak :

"All my life," the obese man began, "I have abhorred wasps and bees. I have never eaten honey, because to my mind bees were such hideous creatures. When I was a boy a wasp once stung me behind the ear," he said, moving his left eyelid high as if he were trying to point to his left ear with his eyelashes. His ear, at this lazy motion, moved a little. "It is strange how one suddenly remembers everything in the end, though I have expected my memory to astonish me for some time now!" His breathing was very heavy, and he obviously found it very strenuous to speak. "But now," he went on, "suddenly, since I discovered this nest a few days ago, I am no longer afraid of these insects. I am suddenly no longer afraid."

A look of achievement had settled on his face, the muscles of his temples were relaxed, there was a smile somewhere at the back of his throat. He looked as if he did not wish to speak any further, his hands lay limp beside his large body, his left hand very near the nest in the wall.

"They always said that wasps do not sting unless they are attacked. In summer, we used to eat in the garden. There was a little table, little chairs, coffee and plum-flan with cream. Has a wasp ever settled on a morsel of flan when you were about to place it into your mouth? (They loved our flan). Quickly you draw back your spoon, you blow and try to hit the insect away, and it flies off a few feet and then straight at you to attack. And then it stings, and when it has stung you it flutters away somewhere and dies, all because unwittingly it landed at the wrong place,

at the wrong time. All creatures of nature except men are disinterested in the motives of attack, or for that matter, the motives of love. Pat and stroke one dog, and he may yelp with delight. Do the same to another, and he may growl."

"You have a sharp mind," said Reubenovitz. But the compliment was lost on the obese man. He seemed beyond the border where praise or accusation have any meaning: he seemed able to spare strength only to communicate outwards, without receiving in return.

"Look," he said, turning his glance on the wasps, "what miserable creatures we are compared to them. I think that a long time ago I ceased to believe in God. And still, when I look at these insects, the idea of God makes me choke with anger. Because of the idea God my mind is warped with pride, and my body is impotent with fear. Why do we cling to the belief that there is a world of the spirit? Why didn't we, like the Spartans, kill our cripples at birth? Why did we set up laws to forbid adultery? Who invented an evil meaning for that word? Because we believe there exists some spirit which rules the world. Why did not the babe Isaac struggle and kick at Moriah? Why did not Christ fight the soldiers on his way to Golgotha? Why did we let these hooligans torture us to death? These wasps here, they would never have submitted and cried out: they know not what they are doing. Why didn't *we* revolt, why didn't *we* hit back, no matter at what price? Why?" the obese man cried out. And then, quite calm again after this pitch of anger, he said:

"There are not two prisoners here who would give up their lives to fight the insults of these hooligans. And do you know why? Simply because man is afraid of death. Not simply of physical death, though that too is frightening. Here the soil is cold and damp, and I dream of being buried in some desert where the sands are warm. But no. It's the uncertainty of the existence of God that is most frightening, which death, one imagines, will clarify, one way or the other. It is that uncertainty that makes man tarry on in life, makes him postpone death even when life is not worth living any longer. It is that that makes a man afraid to die. But the godless wasps, are they afraid to die? They attack at the slightest provocation, and once they have stung, they simply perish."

"Bravo!" Andreas suddenly burst out. He had apparently been standing, unnoticed, near the fat man, and had heard his tranquil peroration. He seemed to be very excited, there was a fine glow in his eyes, and he was trembling. "Bravo!" he shouted at Reubenovitz, "your friend there, he's a prophet. He has predicted what shall come to pass. There will come a time, there will soon come a time, when man will no longer be afraid of death, and love will prevail, and man will once more become potent. Yes," he shouted, "that is right: that is right." And he walked away leaving the hungry men to themselves again, who were beyond being puzzled by this strange interruption.

Andreas had walked over to the dais and was now summoning the starved prisoners to the parade ground. They could hardly move their listless stinking bodies. This was the fourth day of the 'fast,' and the whole camp was calm. It is strange that there could nowhere be discerned a mood of desperation, prisoners willing to stake their life for a crust of bread. They knew that no man would be alive if this fast went on much longer and this knowledge made them silent and calm. It was this calm which nauseated Kretschmar, filled him with vicious anger, with an in-

describable restlessness, on which unsatisfactory note he refused to end the experiment.

Since about six o'clock that morning, the guards had been given instructions to spread the rumour that there would shortly be food. These rumours had had a very strange effect. Reubenovitz said later that that morning he experienced once more the truth behind the Latin professor's words that a man must rot through work, must bring about his own destruction. He said that he saw several prisoners that morning struggle to the top of one of the huts, and even the little height they had from which to hurl themselves down was sufficient for them to kill themselves. For they dived to the ground head first, holding their arms to the side of their bodies. Reubenovitz maintained quite firmly that those believing the rumour that there would be food, once they felt that they had overcome the 'fast,' were then ready to destroy themselves by their own hand. On the other prisoners, on the majority, the effect was one brought about by similar credulity, and their reaction was similarly ludicrous. Immediately on hearing the rumours of the guards, they believed that their ordeal was over. Believing the guards were telling the truth, they summoned all their strength to feign some kind of physical freshness to tide them over the last period of waiting. The prisoners even joked with the guards, who, sensing the success of their rumour, permitted this familiarity. Everyone felt good towards his neighbour. There was a feeling in everyone of having recovered from a serious operation. The hours passed, no food was brought, one, two hours, three, four, the whole morning gone and everyone had somehow organised his remaining strength only to hold out this last hour. The guards kept on making excuses, and were somehow successful in prolonging the deception. "Of course when you feel good towards everyone," Reubenovitz had said later, "you don't suspect any lies!" In the afternoon Kretschmar had ordered the roll-call. Andreas had summoned the prisoners, and after they had laboriously gathered on the parade ground, Kretschmar came to address them.

"There's going to be food," he said. "A really good meal for everybody to fill up all those air bubbles in your bellies. But first of all let's have a nice roll-call to count your numbers, because we don't want to waste any food. I have to let the chefs know exactly how many meals to prepare. Chicken, it's going to be chicken. They want to know how many chickens they have to pluck. Or is it to be steak, fine red meat, with onions for flavouring? I must see what they've got, but in any case, how many are there left, eh? Let's have a count."

The prisoners obediently fell into some kind of formation which made a count possible. The count lasted several hours. They had to count themselves many times, for every time the final number was slightly different from the previous one, because some prisoners had collapsed or died during the count.

They were finally dismissed late in the afternoon. By that time they were utterly exhausted. The excitement of the day had played havoc with their weakened bodies. Many simply sat down, or found somewhere to lie down, refusing to go any further. Reubenovitz went back to the obese man lying by the latrine wall. He had not moved from there all day.

He seemed to have grown fatter these last few hours, as if the air had forced itself into his lungs which he seemed too weak to exhale. His flesh now had a putrid purple tinge, his lips were very red and moist, his eyes

feverish, his stare was vague and undirected. His left arm was still lying outstretched towards the wasp nest, and the insects were crawling about his hand.

"Fifteen wasps have died in the last few hours," the obese man said to Reubenovitz. "There are hardly any left. It is October, and one by one, they fly back to their nest, you can tell their time is up. They stop a few yards from the nest, and just crawl along very slowly. Suddenly you see them come to a stop, and then they lie quite still, and without a struggle, they die. "Why," he suddenly shouted out, trying to raise himself up, clenching his right hand into a fist, and raising it up, "Why does God drive us mad? Why does the Almighty make us suffer so, why does He drive us to seek happiness, so that we do not want to depart from life, that we look upon death as some kind of risk which makes us afraid?"

"I have lain here," he said, "for many days. The guns," he panted, "the guns are drawing near! Liberation! Too late, too late!" He tried very hard to say a great many things very quickly, and with every new sentence he seemed to make a very great effort, as if this would be his last chance of expression. "It doesn't matter any more, liberation. I've outgrown my longing for freedom. I want to die now," the obese man said, "like those wasps, in a quiet, dignified way, without fear. But God will not let me!" he shouted out, trying to raise himself up once more. "The wasps on my hand, the last of the young ones this year, will not let me die in peace. When I die, my hand will twitch, and the wasps will sting me. Be calm, but they will sting!" he cried out, as if he already felt the pain of their insect-poison. "It's the fear of death makes man struggle in life. These hooligans are innocent, yes, innocent!" he shouted out, his voice very weak, though, and hoarse. "It is He. He is guilty, and I curse Him! I curse Him! I curse Him!"

With these words he collapsed completely, he slumped down, and he died very soon after. Reubenovitz stayed for some time with the dead man, whose obesity death had dwindled a little. He drew the eyelids down, and folded the man's hands over his chest. He noticed as he did this that the wasps had stung the man's left hand, and for some minutes he watched the hand swell with the poison.

There was food in the evening, and during the night the guns drew very close.

'THE HOOLIGAN,' a novel by Rudolf Nassauer, is being published by Messrs. Peter Owen Ltd., in March/April 1960 at 16/-

Location Superintendent

"Tell me," said the stout man who sat next to the chairman of the interviewing committee, "Do you think that the native is a human being?" The stout man was Mr. van der Berg who ran a local bakery and was Chairman of the Native Affairs Committee. His voice would be decisive, I knew, when the committee came to decide whether I should be appointed as Location Superintendent in Sunnyside, the lesser of the town's two native locations. I decided to risk all.

"Yes," I said, "The native is a human being."

Mr. van der Berg subsided into his chair and turned me over to the Chairman.

I had not really expected to get the post but when the telegram came three days later telling me that I would be appointed subject to the approval of the Minister, I was worried. The Minister was unlikely to be a liberal like Mr. van Zyl, and besides, if the Department of the Interior was up to its job, he would have seen my files. But as it happened the Department of the Interior was not up to its job. The files had clearly not been sent on. So three weeks later, I arrived in Sunnyside.

The bus brings you to a large dusty square dominated by the beer hall, a huge building with no ceiling, a concrete floor, and scrubbed white-wood tables and stools. There is a red-brick urinal on the far side, a little huddle of mud houses to the left and, finally, my office with its neat fence, its little garden and its verandah, looking out over towards the urinal. There are no trees in Sunnyside and the sun burns up the dust of the square. Usually the only person there is the barber, who sits on his stool by the urinal, waiting for customers. He's actually a housepainter too, but just before I arrived the estimates had been cut by the Council, and repairs on our houses had been brought to a standstill. Running off the square is Dutch Reformed Street, which runs all the way to the fence of the rail track. Trains stop at this point and discharge water which runs down Dutch Reformed Street to a pool at the bottom near the square. Adjoining the square on the corner is a long rectangle of open space. My predecessor, van Niekerk, has wanted to teach the natives to play Rugby there, but they had said it was an old cemetery and that they couldn't play rugby on the graves of the dead. That's how van Niekerk's one project of social reform came to be shelved.

Anyway van Niekerk had gone farming now, and it was all up to me. I went in to meet my boss, Theunissen, who had come over especially from Number One, the other bigger location.

Theunissen was a big man of about fifty-five. He was quite bald now, and had an orange coloured mole on his upper lip. We were to work together in the Native Affairs Department, in all, for a period of

about three months. At our first meeting he was eager to make friends and he chatted lightly about life in Bosspruit. The trouble, as he saw it, was the Jews. "It's typical," he said, but did not allow me to ask what was typical of what. As it turned out it was the Jews who were typical, not only in Bosspruit, but in the world at large, and especially in Joburg. Mr. Weissman who organised a charity in the town to provide extra blankets for old Africans in winter was typical, and so, surprisingly, was Okey Geffin, who had saved us by kicking five penalties when the All Blacks were a goal and two tries up. Theunissen, however, knew what they were really up to.

"What do I have to do, Mr. Theunissen?" I asked.

"Ndlovu in the office is a good boy," he replied, "But you'll have to watch some of these new police. Some of them bring brandy into the location."

When he had gone, I began work on my Ph D thesis, and was able to get on quietly with it for the first few days. True, the Rev. Mokgatle, Chairman of the Advisory Board came to see me, and Corporal Prinsloo, the only other European on my staff, seemed upset when I offered him a cup of tea in one of the office cups. But he had merely come to discuss the social which the board was planning as a welcoming gesture for me. The first real problem I had to face came on Friday night with the pass raid.

Outside my office there was a sort of a cage made of old packing cases and chicken wire, where offenders could be held until they were transported to prison. There was a spar across the top, and once later on when I came in, I found Corporal Prinsloo caning a little eight-year-old boy, whom he had made to hang by his fingers from the spar and take his trousers off. The boy, I learned, had been a persistent truant, and had been handed over to my police by the sisters at the Catholic School.

When the pass raid began, the black maria picked up its loads and delivered them to my office. Later in the evening all those arrested would be taken up to Bosspruit and offered the three options of signing an admission of guilt form and paying ten shillings, of going to gaol, or of accepting farm labour. But meanwhile the outer office was full and for most of those detained it was a routine social occasion. The relatives of those arrested exchanged banter with the police, or slipped off to fetch money so that they could pay their fines. One young man grinned at me through the chicken wire, "The prisoner of Zenda," he said.

There were, however, one or two cases which looked more troublesome. A little old lightly coloured man was arguing in Suto with the police. It turned out that he had come in with a farmer to market and had been left for several hours to mind some horses on the station. Being a bit bored with sitting around he had slipped up to the beer hall for a drink. I decided to raise the matter with Corporal Prinsloo.

"The horses," I said, "are still waiting on the station."

Corporal Prinsloo thought about this, but made no comment.

"We'll probably have the farmer down here creating hell if we don't let his boy go."

Corporal Prinsloo turned to the little man and warned him not to come into Sunnyside without a pass again. He wandered off without showing any sign of gratitude or of irritation. There was to be trouble the next day because one of those arrested was a Methodist Deacon, who had had to use the church collection to pay his fine; but for the moment

the others were taken off to Bosspruit, without any major protest, and I was able to go back to my hotel only half an hour late.

The case of Corporal Prinsloo and the truant boy worried me quite a bit, and I was glad to find that there was a African Social Worker available to look into the case. I found however that the Social Workers salary, like the ante-natal clinic and soup-kitchen behind my office, was financed out of the beer hall account and the problem was that beer sales were falling. I decided to have a word with the beer hall manager.

"Is there any chance at all," I asked, as I looked into the barrel at the pinkish scum which had gathered on top of the beer, "of our finding more customers." I knew that we could hardly put up the price, since we were already making a profit of 1/9 per gallon.

"We could let the Basutos from the mine come," he suggested tentatively.

"Can't they come already?" I asked.

"No, they haven't got passes," he said, "You'd have to tell the police to leave them alone."

There were always a lot of Basuto boys wearing blankets and straw hats, squatting under the tree outside the mine gate down the road. They came to the gate and waited, and every few days the mines would employ some of them, and they would go to live in the compound for nine months. But it's cold on the open veld on a winter night and the boys would obviously appreciate the warmth of the beerhall. I raised the matter with Theunissen. He was a bit reserved about it at first. The White Sergeant over at Number One, he told me, was worried about the Basuto's bringing dagga into the location. Dagga is the South African equivalent of marijuana. Still he would see what could be done.

As it turned out he persuaded the Sergeant. The Basutos were sent for and came up in a body. Theunissen spoke to them in Afrikaans standing under the flagpoles from which the Union Jack and the South African flags were hung. Sergeant Makiwane, the nicer of my two African sergeants, translated into Suto. Everyone seemed very pleased. The Basutos drifted off for a drink, and Theunissen came to drink tea in my office, feeling rather proud of his generosity.

I confess that I too felt not a little proud of my achievement on this occasion. I suppose that was what gave me the self-confidence to start trying to reform the administration of my local native police. Some of them were already good friends of mine, especially Ngcoba, who sat in the outer office to take complaints, and who always reminded me of the taxi-drivers I had seen in American films. He was always good for a joke, and the local people seemed to like him. People knew that he would help if he could, and that if they had urgent messages to get to town, he would phone through for them. On one occasion I saw a nervous young man come in and murmur something to him in Suto. Ngcoba picked up the telephone and dialled. "Can you tell me about Mrs. Kandanise," he said. He listened for the reply, put the phone down and went on with his work. The young man went up and spoke anxiously to him. "Yes, yes," said Ngcoba in Afrikaans, "You have a girl-child." "Don't be impatient with him, Ngcoba," I said. "Don't you know what it's like to become a father for the first time." "Baas," he said, "I first became a father when I was fourteen."

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HEINEMANN

It was easy to like Ngcoba, and I never did anything about the brandy he used to take into the police hut. The man I didn't like was the other sergeant, Wycliffe Mpanda. Mpanda had a comical face and he was really not capable of exercising effective authority. But as the senior member of the African police in Sunnyside he had considerable power, and power was something which he liked having and using. When I arrived he had just begun a vendetta against the Msiza family. The Msiza's were a highly respected family in one of the Nonconformist churches in the location, and their good-looking young son, Herbert, had recently joined the police, where he could get a much better wage and conditions than in any other job apart from teaching. He was a good constable and quite well-liked by the local population. The trouble was that one of the people who liked him was one of Mpanda's former girlfriends.

I first saw that there was going to be trouble when one of Msiza's family came to complain that Mpanda's sister had been in their backyard accusing them of illicit beer brewing. I knew that Mpanda's sister worked with him as a sort of private informer, so I sent for him and pointed out that there was no evidence to suggest that the Msiza's were brewing beer and that his sister's conduct had been provocative. He said he would tell her to leave the Msiza's alone.

The next day, however, Mpanda came running in to say that Herbert Msiza had assaulted his sister and that before he could stop her she had gone off to report the matter to the South African Police at Bosspruit. I knew what this meant. The most liberal of the City Councillors had been fighting for years to establish that any policeman convicted of assault should be dismissed from the force. Inevitably then Msiza was convicted and lost his job. Subsequently I discovered that Mpanda had sent his sister to report the matter direct to the white police and had actually paid her bus fare. I sent for him and gave him an angry dressing down. He simply said, "Yes, baas," but he went out leaving me in no doubt that the whole system of authority was on his side, and probably enjoying the irony of the fact that the interventions of a meddling liberal councillor had only armed him with even greater powers.

My tussle with Mpanda had got me emotionally involved in the welfare of the location, and I begun to look forward to the meeting of the Joint Advisory Boards, which met under the chairmanship of Mr. van der Berg in the Bosspruit council chamber. For one thing it would enable me to see the political side of Native Administration, but more than this, I was interested in meeting Thompson Molefhe, one of the elected minority, who was an important enough Congress leader to have been mentioned in Edward Roux' new book on South African working-class history.

Molefhe turned out to be a large and impressive man in his early fifties. He wore the khaki greatcoat which he had got when he served as a Sergeant during the war against German Fascism. On this occasion, however, he said little, and the meeting had not been in progress long before I realised why. Molefhe had a healthy contempt for this purely advisory board. He came only to inform himself of the affairs of the location so that he could take them up with the African Congress later.

The actual purpose of the meeting was to introduce to the board a representative of the Government Native Affairs Department in Pretoria

who had come to announce that the Government proposed to insist on the application in Bosspruit of the Registration of Service Contracts Ordinance. This ordinance required that natives should register their contracts of service with their employers with the police, so that they could be prosecuted if they broke them. The legislation was permissive, however, and thus for Bosspruit had not applied it. Now the Government was insisting.

The man from Pretoria began by emphasising that he felt sure that the Native Affairs Department had always worked and was still working in the best interests of the natives. If it were not, he would not stay with it a single day. He went on to argue that the new legislation would clear the town of loafers, and that this was manifestly in the best interests of the Africans of Bosspruit. The discussion was largely dominated by one of the nominated members of the board, who politely expressed his disagreement with Pretoria, and quoted Mark Anthony's speech from "Julius Caesar" in order, apparently, to drive his point home. When one of the younger elected members began to ask pressing questions however, Mr. van der Berg said that he couldn't stand any more of this and that the member must shut up. Since the member was unwise enough to refuse to do so, Mr. van der Berg was compelled to chase him out of the room, having first tried to hit him with his chairman's hammer.

Two days later I read in the Bosspruit Gazette that Thompson Molefhe had led a large body of Africans into the Town Hall Square, singing "Nkosi Sikelele Afrika" ("God Bless Africa," the Congress hymn), and had addressed them about the Registration of Service Contracts. He said that he had recruited Africans to fight for Britain in the First World War and in the Second, but that if the ordinance was applied in Bosspruit, he certainly would not do so again. Inside the Town Hall the full council was debating the Pretoria proposals. The debate was mostly taken up by a speech from Mr. van der Berg's deputy, who referred to Molefhe's demonstration, and urged the council not to be intimidated, but to do its duty. The recommendations were accepted.

I returned to Sunnyside to find that preparations were in hand for my official welcome. The Rev. Mokgatle asked if the Board might use my office for a meeting to discuss the arrangements. I waited on the verandah and listened to Dinah Shore singing "Buttons and Bows" on the beer hall radio. While I was waiting, a boy from the Post Office brought me a telegram. I had been offered a post in England. I decided to take it.

The Rev. Mokgatle came out of my office with the arrangements having been made. "I'm not staying, Mr. Mokgatle," I said, "I'm going to England."

He looked at me and was quiet for a time. Then he said, "Now they'll send us another Dutchman."

"What makes you think that the English are any different from the Dutch, Mr. Mokgatle?" I asked.

The rest of my time in the location was spent in arranging farewells. I brought some brandy and had a party in my office with Ngcoba and the better policemen. I broke the news to Theunissen, who seemed relieved and congratulated me on my new appointment. Work on my Ph D thesis went ahead and was interrupted only by the visit of the Special Branch sergeant, who came to investigate me, to see whether I should be allowed

a passport. He was the trainer of the local Police rugby team and a friend of Corporal Prinsloo, who was himself an excellent scrum-half.

My final call was on Mr. van der Berg at his bakery. "Well," he said, "if we'd known that you were going to leave us so soon we would have made other arrangements. Did you like your job here?"

"My work was made much easier by Mr. Ndlovu," I said. "He is a most able man to have working as a clerk."

Mr. van der Berg sipped his tea and looked thoughtfully at me. "Yes," he replied. "One thing about Henry Ndlovu, he knows you're white and he's black."

RICHARD CHURCH

From Africa

*We have been together, two persons
Enlarged by illusion into one.
And now, the separation, the silence,
Half Earth's hemisphere apart
Under the bridge and orbit of the sun.
For me, in Africa, the solitude worsens
Beneath the mockery of barking doves
And noontide's drumming radiance
Threatening death.
I watch the poisonous pools, think
Of every possibility of loss;
The burden of duty, the fetters
Of remorse. I see the tyrant sink
Over the desert he has drawn dry.
The cricket clicks in the crumbled moss.
All is dried out, all that matters
To the human spirit crying of thirst
Under the indifferent African sky,
Crying for Europe, for first
And intimate things, love, home,
The two persons that were one—
All now seared by this African light
And its dreaded reverse, the African night
Threatening death.*

The Travel Sketches of Henry James

The travel books of Henry James can be a revelation to people who have usually found travel literature disappointing. The most sedentary of readers might find himself converted by them to a more active interest in new places. The reason for this lies partly in James's rich capacity for expressing enjoyment—no author has ever had it more abundantly—but also in the fact that he writes from the peculiarly advantageous standpoint of the American.

A good place at which to begin is the early sketch of Chester where, after much piquant description, he concludes with an account of a visit to the cathedral, in which a sermon was delivered by Canon Charles Kingsley. "The sermon," he writes, "beneath that triply consecrated vault, should have had a builded majesty. It had not . . .," and this brings him to a point which recurs again and again in the writings of James and other Americans; namely, that English people fail in many respects to live up to and appreciate their own environment. The American, only too conscious of the meagreness of his environment, is 'tempted to accuse his English neighbours of being impenetrable and uninspired, to affirm that they do not half discern their good fortune, and that it takes passionate pilgrims, vague aliens and other disinherited persons to appreciate the "points" of this admirable country.' James is one of a group of nineteenth century Americans—Hawthorne, Howells and Henry Adams may also be named in this context—whose response to England and Europe generally is of this heightened quality. The emotional and intellectual equipment of the American was ideal for this kind of writing. His consciousness of traditional ties with the Old World, together with deprivations caused by the newness of the New, sharpened both the senses and the sentiments. He was ready to fall in love with the picturesque, with the romantic relics of the past, but for more interesting reasons than are usually associated with such tastes. In some Americans these feelings are all the more attractive for being accompanied by a diffident hesitancy or an element of Yankee resistance. Hawthorne's *Our Old Home*, a predecessor of James's English sketches, contains a pleasing mixture of attitudes. He describes a street in Warwick as 'an emblem of England itself . . . The new things are based and supported on sturdy old things, and derive a massive strength from their deep and immemorial foundations, though with such limitations and impediments as only an Englishman could endure. But he likes to feel the weight of all the past on his back; and, moreover, the antiquity that overburdens him has taken root in his being, and has grown to be rather a hump than a pack, so that there is no getting rid of it without tearing his whole structure to pieces.'

An American, he writes elsewhere, 'accepts growth and change as the law of his own national and private existence,' but 'has a singular tenderness for the stone-incrusted institutions of the mother-country.' James's response to England is more completely one of delight—a delight sometimes raised to a kind of wantonness, and always flavoured with the half-humorous recognition that the susceptibility he expresses is just part of a national doom. His early tale 'A Passionate Pilgrim' deals, in a spirit which combines comedy and pathos, with an especially advanced case of this helpless addiction of Americans. 'The Madonna of the Future,' of the same period, is a parallel case, the central figure here being a victim of Italy.

The subject of such pieces as his sketch of Chester is not merely the picturesque, but the picturesque recognised for what it is to an American ('our old friend the sentimental tourist'). There is always an element of 'situation.' He confesses in this essay that on the visit he records he has been 'playing at first impressions for the second time,' and in the company of a sceptic who laments that his own relish for the picturesque has failed him. He emerges unscathed, with a genial apologia for Chester:

I defied him, at any rate, to argue successfully against the effect of the brave little walls of Chester. There could be no better example of that phenomenon so delightfully frequent in England—an ancient property or institution lovingly readopted and consecrated to some modern amenity. The good Cestrians may boast of their walls without a shadow of that mental reservation on grounds of modern ease which is so often the tax paid by the romantic; and I can easily imagine that, though most modern towns contrive to get on comfortably without this stony girdle, these people should have come to regard theirs as a prime necessity. For through it, surely, they may know their city more intimately than their unbuckled neighbours—survey it, feel it, rejoice in it as many times a day as they please.

He multiplies phrases to express his pleasure in Chester's walls: 'It is the gentlest and least offensive of ramparts; it completes its long irregular curve without a frown or menace in all its disembattled stretch.' 'City walls, to a properly constituted American,' he says in one of his Italian sketches, 'can never be an object of indifference.'

By his sheer verbal gift James can convey the fresh powerful appeal of objects whose characteristics tend otherwise to suffer from the attrition of habit and *cliché*. The Norman towers of Exeter are as 'proudly and sturdily built – as if the masons had been urged by a trumpet-blast, and the stones squared by a battle-axe . . . ' In the same county are 'villages thatched and trellised as if to take a prize for improbability . . . ' Stonehenge may be a 'hackneyed shrine of pilgrimage,' he writes: 'At the time of my former visit a picnic-party was making libations of beer on the dreadful altar-sites. But the mighty mystery of the place has not yet been stared out of countenance; and as on this occasion there were no picnickers we were left to drink deep of all its ambiguities and intensities.'

This romantic value extends to the commoner features of the contemporary scene. His American appetite for all that expresses the ways of England causes him to give attention, and with a deliberate humorous virtuosity, to things that an Englishman would have taken for granted. On his arrival at Liverpool (always an important place for first impressions) he dwells upon the 'very taste of the national muffin, the creak of the



LONGFELLOW

(and short ones, too)

Tell it now in joyful numbers,
 Life with Guinness is more gay
 Poets, peasants, peers and plumbers
 Drink five million every day.

Yes,
FIVE MILLION
GUINNESS
 are enjoyed every day



waiter's shoes as he came and went (could anything be so English as his intensely professional back? it revealed a country of tradition) . . . ' And he has an excellent paragraph on London railway stations, with special reference to the W. H. Smith bookstalls: ' . . . a feature not to be omitted in any enumeration of the charms of Paddington and Euston. It is a focus of warmth and light in the vast smoky cavern; it gives the idea that literature is a thing of splendour, of a dazzling essence, of infinite gas-lit red and gold.' There is indeed no end to expressiveness, whatever aspect of English life he turns to. 'To the searching American eye,' writes the narrator of 'A Passionate Pilgrim,' 'there is no tint of observation with which the great grimy face of London doesn't flush.'

Part of the secret of these American travel books is that, though written by authors of great distinction, they deal with the basic pleasures of travel, with those things that the American reading public interested in Europe would most want to know about. To say that Hawthorne, Howells and James *described* the places they visited may seem a rather unnecessary statement to make about writers of travel-books; but Stevenson in his *Inland Voyage* does not describe Belgium, except in a few very scanty pictorial passages; nor does it appear from his anecdotes or his passages of reflection, that the object of his 'voyage' was to discover that country or to reveal it to others. Similarly, the reader of *Eothen* must not expect a very sustained account of what the Middle East had to offer to travellers in the 1830's. Primarily a record of personal adventures, encounters and prejudices, it deals rather casually and surprisingly little with places as such, though Kinglake could describe very vividly on occasion. These two writers, with all their virtues, have in common a quality which distinguishes them from Hawthorne, Howells and James: their egoism. Ruskin describes, but in a curiously specialised way. The Americans are concerned first and foremost with the human interest of travel, and their descriptions, however civilised, do not go beyond subjects of general appeal to the average serious reader. Indeed they are on sympathetic terms with quite bedrock levels of tourist curiosity. In Rome, for example, it was to be assumed that one would wish to see the Pope. Howells describes a ceremony at which the Pope was present, noting that His Holiness had a cold and hawked and spat into a handkerchief. Hawthorne, after an account of a similar experience at St. Peter's, writes: 'I am glad to have seen the Pope, because now he may be crossed out of the list of sights to be seen.' James, describing the new post-1870 Rome, mentions the Pope in his chariot 'with his uplifted fingers like some inaccessible idol in his shrine,' as one of the sights which one must now forego; and then he gives a graphic account of the King of Italy making a public appearance, a symbol of changed times. It is characteristic of James's sense of the 'documentary' that he should note this change as manifesting itself first, for him, at the newspaper stand. Censorship has gone, and 'Rome reading unexpurgated news is another Rome indeed.' But it is only within the quasi-poetic unity of his imaginative impressions that the documentary has its place. He is not like Taine in London, organising the material of his impressions into the hard prose order of a social survey. In James's travel sketches the integrity and charm of the experience itself are preserved, the very ordinary things mingling with the refinements and sublimities. He delights in enhancing an experience with lavish gestures of appreciation, but it needs to be said of James that what

he most wishes to convey are simple pleasures :

The smile of Rome, as I have called it, and its insidious message to those who incline to ramble irresponsibly and take things as they come, is ushered in with the first breath of spring, and then grows and grows with the advancing season till it wraps the whole place in its tenfold charm. As the process develops you can do few better things than go often to Villa Borghese and sit on the grass—on a stout bit of drapery—and watch its exquisite stages. It has a frankness and a sweetness beyond any relenting of **our** clumsy climates even when ours leave off their damnable faces and begin. Nature departs from every reserve with a confidence that leaves one at a loss where, as it were, to look—leaves one, as I say, nothing to do but to lay one's head among the anemones at the base of a high-stemmed pine and gaze up crestward and skyward along its slanting silvery column.

Confronted with a great artistic masterpiece he responds magnificently. He offers little or no technical or learned comment, but he makes the mind of the reader expand with the recognition of a more generous order of enjoyment than most people are capable of. If it is a picture he usually describes it, in visually and humanly intelligible terms, not in the abstract language of the critic. His descriptions of Tintoretto's 'Pallas chasing away Mars' and 'The Marriage at Cana,' and Veronese's 'The Rape of Europa' (all in the long essay on Venice) are happy examples, and do for the reader services all too seldom performed by writers on painting; that is, of making him want to see the works in question, and of helping him, in the most frankly elementary way, to enjoy them.

With the re-issue some years ago of *A Little Tour in France* and *The American Scene*, and more recently of *Italian Hours*, and with the good news that *English Hours* is to appear again, it is a pleasure to realise that the whole of James's achievement in the field of travel literature will soon be accessible.

T. W. HARRISON

My Migratory Bird and the Divine

Once I let him go, since through Thy loving hand
Broken wings expand, so Thou couldst count my swallow
Fleeing my cold snow for fertile golden land.
When I command, my crippled bird must follow
His restless band out of Thy El Dorado,
Dropping wet guano in Thy old and loving hand.

Seven Poems

POEM FOR MY GRANDFATHER

(On the Anniversary of his Death)

*To-day, a candle in a glass
Burns slowly on the mantelpiece.
Wheesht, the dead are here.*

*My father, your grey haired son,
Tastes again the salt, wax prayers
Of your sacred, dying day.*

*You are a name, holy in his presence,
The last solemn date
In our calendar of death.*

*Truly a ghost, my father sees, you.
A kind man's regret softens his face.*

*But for me there is no introduction:
For me you are a light on the mantelpiece,
A half shadow on the wall.*

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NEVER YOU

*It could not have been you I loved
When the big tree by your window
Lent the room those feasts of blossom.*

*It could not be you
For whom I looked for words
To call up your thin dark beauty
From our moderated pain.*

*And it wasn't you
Who understood more than was needed,*

*For your words are small and stupid,
Your hard, clothed body is obscene.
Keep away from me for ever:
You are all I hate.*

SOVEREIGN PENNY

*My grandfather, the benevolent head
On a penny, pressed in my scraped fist
Will not be twisted across
His round flat smiling world.*

*He crouches away from awkward holes
That have lost me many coins
Down in the hot hell of my pocket.
He won't suffocate.*

*This infinite well-wisher
Falls untouched through the steel
Throats of slot machines
Back into my bent hand.*

*Thrown to the sun, he spins
His grin back to the dust
And waits obtrusive
For me to pick him up.*

*I know what he wants:
To be a proud charm on a string round my neck.
When I tug at him for luck or breath
I'll choke.*

POEM FOR JOHN KNOX

*A goading, rigid puritan,
You were most of the landscape,*

*And my grandfather, without formal recognition,
Must have met you many times.*

*He would have seen his children
Chipped and shaped by the harsh vigour of your words,*

*And wondered at the smell of debate
You spread among the trespassing city;*

*Though his dream of final revealed redemption
Could never be obliterated,
But flourished more in this jealous, acid soil.*

*You, too, would have made a garden here,
Though with mostly home-grown seed;
And certainly your roots have squirmed and stretched
And stiffened under the lashed earth.*

*I, sinning against my grandfather's messiah,
And the tang of restraint you imposed on my neighbours,
Remember and am consoled
By burd Helen and the loves of Robert Burns.*

ISAAC (Of Ishmael)

*It was my father forced him into the desert—
My father, the patriarch, fearing for my inheritance,
And my mother, jealous of the strength of a concubine's child.*

*And I vaguely remember the mocking, knowing boy
Who played his secret games around our tents
And crept in at night to his mother the slave woman's pillow.*

*He could do marvellous things: whistle wild songs,
Climb trees I couldn't, find unknown caves and streams;
His exploits were legend among our lesser household.*

*But there was that day my father, a man perplexed,
Rejected his furtively proud, unorthodox son:
His God wanted me, and my father always listened.*

*I hear now my brother is chief of a tribe in the desert;
He lives by conquest and has many enemies.
His children plot and starve when he is defeated.*

*I hear rumours he dreams of marching against me
To seize his inheritance. What shall I do against God and my father?
I, too, believe in the destiny of my children.*

*I, too, have suffered, perhaps more than he:
I have had a sacrificial knife laid at my throat.
These lands are a small exchange for that terrifying moment.*

*I would like to help my brother, but he is still proud.
There will be no discussion of peace between us;
And our father, the old God-fearing man, has been dead many years.*

THE VICTIM

*Her children must have changed for Golders Green
Or Richmond, and left her to be a dignified scavenger
Among the incredible junk of Whitechapel.*

*Too fat to be a crone,
And yet fearful to children,
She trundles home the picked, outcast tatters
She will make into odd garments.*

*To-day, while she sifts her scraps
Up the close to the unseen locality
Of her fierce transformations,
She shouts with her face tilted
To the top of the building.*

*And, not as the mad are supposed to be,
She is coherent
And doesn't mutter:
Yet pedestrians smile, and drivers wink at their companions.*

*' Hitler sent people to gas-chambers.'
She tells her miraculous, sympathetic audience,
' And those villains took my machine!'*

*The single profitable instrument among her furniture
Is gone, and when her supporting monologue is over
She will climb the stairs
And sit calling on God to amend the future.*

*It is useless to tell her the state gives pensions
To those whom fate has disemployed.*

She, a proud widow, is outside your help.

ON A TRIP TO YORK

In 1190 there was a massacre of the Jews at York.

*In the narrow, crowded streets
Of this cold northern town
I remember the elegies for the besieged martyrs
Of nearly eight hundred years ago.*

*And in the Minster, where
The good archbishops gently smile in stone,
I want to scream in Hebrew
Up the great square tower
And dance on the placid flagstones
Kicking at the scrupulous shock
For the death of one improbable Jew.*

*But I stand and watch the choirboys, two by two,
In red and white, marching to evensong,*

*And think: The dead of York and Kier and Warsaw
Lie in no ghetto in the heart.*

*Our words to mourn them storm the common air
When they are fierce and bleak and fact.*

STAND

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Sooner or later one is asked the question, and sooner or later one has to muster up, for one's own sake, an answer to it. Of course the first answer is, "Because I enjoy them," but that is insufficient, even for oneself. "What is the use of it?" people want to know. "Why should we bother?" And anyone who believes that the novel does provide more than a momentary enjoyment, and can teach us what no other art-form does, has to go on, he has to argue his case. And when he reads some of our fattest and most authoritative critical quarterlies, he cannot help feeling at times that in order to argue his case he has first to rescue the novel from some of those who think of themselves as its warmest friends; from those critics who are so involved with it that they never ask themselves the outsider's honest query.

Ours is an age of specialisation, as everybody knows; and everybody knows too that the only way to win respect from other specialists is by showing them that one's own speciality is just as special as theirs. But respect is something very different from attention, and it is attention first, and attention always, that the critic should be trying to gain for the work he is discussing. And it seems to me that one obvious way of doing so would be for the serious critic of fiction to make it plain that his specialisation is not all that special and private, after all. Indeed, one of the first answers to the question, "Why read novels?" is that in an age of specialisation the novel remains singularly un-special; and, so far from this being anything for critics or novelists to be ashamed of, it is one of the glories of the form.

The novel really is knowledge: the recorded knowledge of the states of consciousness of different men at different times. For most of us, for most of the time, one kind of knowledge or way of knowing excludes every other; we know abstractly or we know intuitively, we know sensuously or we know mentally. But the novelist, ideally, knows simultaneously what we know only in alternation, and within any single work he is able to deploy one kind of knowledge against another, to imply one when he is writing about another, to remind us of the others when we would prefer to read only about one. Continually, the novelist is shifting, moving, comparing, remembering, uniting his knowledge, in his creation of character. The characters in a novel are the novelist's individual foci of consciousness; they, ultimately, are what the novelist knows, and the greater the novelist the more people he will be able to create and the more he will know about each one of them.

Already, here, we can see why the novel is so supremely important in this 'age of specialisation,' when we feel the multiplication of abstract

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PUTNAM

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'knowledge' of all kinds to be not liberating but frightening and discouraging; when every publisher's crammed list and every learned journal is an invitation to us to give up the struggle for consciousness, with the feeling "It's too much, it's beyond me." The novelist can remind us again and again that what is important for us to know, outside our own specialities, is not too much, is not beyond us. To put it very simply, the novelist cannot be expected to know about the latest developments in physics or medicine, say, but he can be expected to know, he has known in the past, what it is to *be* a physicist or a doctor. The novelist knows, or should know, what it is to be practically anybody: this is why he can so much help to restore to us that sense of community which nowadays is broken not only by racial and ideological strife, but also seems to be shattered anew by every advance that is made in the accumulation of knowledge about the physical world.

The help of the novelist is invaluable, too, in our consideration of the abstract programmes or ideologies which some people feel it is the novelist's duty to have no truck with, others that it is his duty simply to make enticing. Now the novelist must be capable of understanding the attractions of ideology, if only because so many men live by ideology; but as a novelist he knows that any political or moral abstraction has its real life and importance only within the individual men who are affected by it. If for a moment the novelist should forget this, then he is no longer imparting to us the knowledge which we ask for from him. We say that he has become a propagandist; but there is another way of expressing it, which seems to me more useful here—and that is to say that such a novelist has become as ignorant as the character he is creating; he has allowed his consciousness to become as shrunken and constricted as that of the ideologue. Consciousness again is the key-word: the novel is *about* consciousness, about the kinds, degrees, the modes, the states of consciousness which men have experienced. What the novel always strives for is a total consciousness, a total illumination of the experience which it describes. And as readers, we have to judge the novel by the extent to which it enlarges or falls short of our own total awareness of the fullness and variety of life as we have experienced it.

However, the novel does more than 'enlarge' our consciousness, more than show us how different and how similar we are to other people—vital and restorative though this work is, and especially so, as I have suggested, today. The novel also gives point and direction to our consciousness, in the very act of enlarging it. The best way of indicating what is meant here is by giving an example; and one cannot do better than to take one's example from Tolstoy, who, even to those of us who read him only in translation, must seem indisputably the greatest novelist who has ever lived. And the greatness of Tolstoy resides precisely in the truly astonishing range and depth of the knowledge he brings to bear (and forces us to bear) upon each of his characters.

When one begins reading Tolstoy one at first misses the particular personal timbre that agitates the pages of most other novelists; one wonders at his peculiar mildness and placidity of tone; one wonders how he seems able to say such very damaging things about his characters without seeming to hold anything against them. Take the opening scene of *War and Peace*, Mlle Scherer's famous *soirée*, and the description of Prince Vassili Kuragin within it—how he speaks 'from habit, like a wound-up clock, saying things he did not even wish to be believed'; how he accedes to the request of Boris

Drubetskoy's mother not because he wants to do her a favour but because he feels it would be more trouble not to accede; how he takes Mlle Scherer's hand at an important moment in their conversation 'and for some reason bends it downwards,' as a way of imparting significance to what he is saying. In all this we see the man emerge from the top of his 'perfumed shining bald head' to his court stockings and slippers; but it is not the wonderful clarity and absurdity of the detail to which I want to draw attention, nor the economy and frankness of Tolstoy's means of displaying this detail, before our eyes, with no legerdemain or fuss of any kind—it is the calmness of his tone. He doesn't seem to *mind* that Prince Kuragin is an old bounder, sponger, hypocrite, bully and liar; and at first his no seeming to mind is disturbing. Every other novelist we know *would* mind thinking how Dostoevsky might have writhed, Dickens might have jeered, Lawrence might have hated. Tolstoy simply lets the old man go on his way; and as Kuragin begins in the novel, so he continues throughout, lying, bullying, sponging. He is a minor character in the book, and nothing very much happens to him, but by the end of the novel we know exactly what he is—and my point is that we know Kuragin not only through what has been written about him, but also because we know what has been written about all the other characters. We know, because Tolstoy knew, all that Kuragin has missed, being what he is: how incapable he is of ever attaining the states of intense consciousness that are suffered or enjoyed by people like Andrey and Pierre, Natasha and Princess Marya. Kuragin, the creature of his society, is one-tenth alive, barely conscious, deaf, deprived, inferior.

Plot is usually thought of as the great moral agent within a novel, what happens to a character being the judgement that is passed upon him. This is true enough, as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough; because the point of fact, as we have seen with Kuragin, nothing at all need happen to a character in any obvious overt sense, and yet he can be placed for his part within a moral scheme. If we are to talk of reward and punishment, we have to say that the novelist does not (or should not) punish his characters: they punish themselves, being what they are: he does not reward his characters, they reward themselves, being what they are. The novelist *knows* them, better than they know themselves or we know ourselves; he knows them fully, he illumines them to our inward view. And there are as many ways of doing this as there are novelists and novels: *Moby Dick* is as different from *War and Peace* as either is from *The Portrait of a Lady*, but they are all great novels, great acts of consciousness.

I cannot help feeling that when people prophesy the demise of the novel they are looking forward to the demise of more than a single art-form: they are half-hoping that the sort of power which is the novelist's will go out of existence. They no longer believe (or want to believe) that it is possible to try to know the human truth of every situation in which people find themselves: they resent the novelist's claim that we can know, and shown, in our weakness and strength, through all the changing forms of our changing societies. If it is true that the novel is dying, then so too is modern man's ambition to know the truth about himself. If the novel lives it will be because that ambition lives still.

The Water Diviner

*Late, I have come to a parched land
doubting my gift, if gift I have,
the inspiration of water
spilt, swallowed in the sand.*

*To hear once more water trickle,
to stand in a stretch of silence
the divine pen twisting in the hand:
sign of depths alluvial.*

*Water owns no permanent shape,
brags, is most itself in chaos;
now, under the shadow of the idol,
dry mouth and dry landscape.*

*No rain falls with a refreshing sound
to settle tubular in a well,
elliptical in a bowl. No grape
lusciously moulds it round.*

*Clouds have no constant resemblance
to anything, blown by a hot wind,
flying mirages; the blue background,
light constructions of chance.*

*To hold back chaos I transformed
amorphous mass: clay, fire, or cloud,
so that the aged gods might dance
and golden structures form.*

*I should have built, plain brick on brick,
a water tower. The sun flies on
arid wastes, barren hells too warm,
and me with a hazel stick!*

*Rivulets vanished in the dust
long ago, great compositions
vapourised, salt on the tongue so thick
that drinking, still I thirst.*

*Repeated desert, recurring drought,
sometimes hearing water trickle,
sometimes not, I, by doubting first,
believe; believing, doubt.*

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The Palermo Tourists Don't See

DANILO DOLCI : *To Feed the Hungry*. Translated by P. D. Cummins.
Introduction by Aldous Huxley. Macgibbon and Kee, 30s.

Beyond the conjecture of most of us is how a woman can manage to go on living with her family and her animals year after year in a house on a landslide, what it is like to live by catching, eating, and selling snails and frogs, what views of life and the world can be entertained by a youth of seventeen who had no schooling at all and spends his days and nights out in the fields with other people's cows; and these things matter because they are part of Europe in 1960 and it should be possible to do something about them. Wordsworth told us nothing about his old Leechgatherer's life or his leeches, but here is a woman called La-patata who is a specialist in the use of leeches, magic, and spells. "For meningitis brought on by the heat we put on twenty; the person gets over the meningitis, and even if he is a bit hard of hearing for the rest of his life, what's that?" Black market cigarette sellers, prostitutes of the most wretched kind, rag and bone men, pickpockets, marketplace sleight-of-hand men, dealers in the occult, beggars, mothers and fathers desperately trying to keep their children alive against frightful odds—what fantastic slices of life, truths stranger than fiction, terrible, frightening, sickening, moving, pathetic, lit up by gleams of courage, enterprise, family affection, and here and there even a grim kind of humour. It is life at rock bottom, distorted and degraded, but far from being dehumanised. The picture is more like Nashe or Defoe than anything belonging to our century; but then western Sicily is very largely still in the middle ages, and its Robin Hood was killed only a year or two ago (see Gavin Maxwell on Giuliano).

Danilo Dolci is only thirty-five. He burnt his boats at Trappeto in 1952, and within eight years has done more than anybody else to call the world's attention to the conditions of life in western Sicily, has put out a series of remarkable books, has become so famous that committees to support his work exist in at least six countries, has received a Lenin Prize and several prison sentences, has rooted himself for good and all among the poor of the region, has married and acquired a vast family of about fourteen—five stepchildren, four of his own, and five adopted. Within these well-filled years he has come to be one of the great symbolic figures for the world's social conscience.

Now for the first time one of his books appears in English. It was the best one to translate because it is a gallery of portraits, but Danilo is hidden behind them; one hopes that the interest it has created may lead to the translation of earlier works where his own voice is more clearly heard, particularly *Act quickly and well for people are dying*, and *Outlaws at Partinico*. The present book is a translation of *Inchiesta a Palermo* (En-

quiry at Palermo—why could this simple and much more sensible title not have been preserved?), a lively and successful translation with only slight inaccuracies here and there. The book first appeared in Italy in 1956; later a somewhat shorter version was put out, with some material omitted but some added, notably the story of the illiterate cowherd Vincenzo which will catch the imagination of all readers. (It was taken down by Dolci in prison and first appeared in *Processo all' Articolo 4*, which is concerned with the celebrated strike-in-reverse for which Dolci was arrested and imprisoned). The translation is made from the second Italian version. The introduction by Aldous Huxley will recall the impressive contribution he made to the B.B.C.'s one-hour broadcast on Dolci some months ago.

The book is made up of two main elements: the results of an enquiry, conducted by means of a questionnaire among 500 unemployed persons in Palermo and its province, and accounts of the lives, experiences and attitudes of a variety of men and women, in Palermo and the countryside, told by themselves. Here and there is a page of social statistics (there were more of them in the first Italian edition; fuller statistical material will be found in *Banditi a Partinico* and *Un Piano per la piena Occupazione*). The answers to the questionnaire were given at the beginning in both Italian versions. Miss Cummings has chosen to put them at the end, which is perhaps a pity for they make a startling introduction; no-one could read these extraordinary statements without at once wanting to know something about the lives of the people who made them. Once you have read about the people you are less surprised at their statements. The translation has one real advantage over the original—a number of illustrations have been added which give some idea of the appearance of the local scene.

To any feeling person these stories must be terrifying, to such depths of suffering and degradation is human nature reduced, and they seem more dreadful because they are told in such a completely matter of fact way. The human mind can adapt itself to almost everything, and these people have accepted the total defeat of centuries, exercising their wits and courage and sometimes even their humour on what one might have thought unendurable circumstances. 'We're on the telephone here' says the woman who lives on the landslide, meaning that great cracks have come once again in the walls and she can talk with the neighbours without going outside. Rosario T., in one of the most picturesque and most moving pieces, says that when his little family group are standing round their basket skinning frogs they sometimes play a game of judge and jury: 'My cousin who cuts off their heads gets 30 years because he's the murderer . . . I go to prison for life because if it hadn't been for me the frogs would still be alive.'

The Authorities lie behind this grim fancy, and poor Rosario who is perpetually miserable at having to kill the frogs at all and is haunted by the look of them, says 'The rich who keep all their land and money for themselves, who never spare us a thought, and who let us starve to death—they ought to dream at night of a basket of heads—not frogs' heads but the heads of all the men and women they've killed—yes, they ought to dream of all the eyes in all those faces watching and watching them.' The translation is harder than the original which says 'the men and women who have died through their fault'; but the translator is true at least to the spirit of Danilo who repeatedly says that people who let others die

when they could prevent it are assassins. A big point was made of this at his trial.

Dolci once told the writer how he collected these stories—not with a tape recorder, not even by shorthand, but the hard way, by longhand, abbreviated as much as possible. He turns their Sicilian dialect into Italian, without other alteration (in *Outlaws at Partinico* you can find some statements in their original Sicilian). The essential thing, he said, is to establish a relation of complete ease, so that people seem almost to be talking to themselves. He tells them he is a northerner, doesn't understand, would like to know. When their recollections falter he asks some simple question and off they go again. This accounts for unexpected transitions, and shows that Dolci's own genius has contributed a good deal to the total effect. Thus you can imagine Vincenzo petering out: 'Last night I dreamt of my uncles. They were dressing a white lambskin. I dreamt about cows too—they were chewing grass . . .' and then Dolci says quietly, 'What about the stars? What do you think of them?' And off goes Vincenzo into that striking meditation that has been noticed by so many. He has some of the poetry of primitive innocence and reminds me of Caliban. In the darkness of his ignorance and wretchedness he has strange geographical notions: 'The earth is an island, there is sea all round it . . . the world looks just like half a pumpkin . . . What's China? Is it a kind of grape? I've never heard of China . . .' He is perhaps the most interesting figure in the book—to quote his story entire would be more informative than any review. 'I know what to do when I'm with animals, but with Christians (Christian in southern Italy means human being) no. My animals—they've shown far more love for me than Christians have . . . I once had a kid and a lamb that followed me wherever I went . . . I've never had any real friends except the kid and the lamb . . . I wish I hadn't loved them because you see I had to have money to buy bread with so I had to sell the kid . . .' Vincenzo was in prison for stealing two bunches of herbs, sentenced to four years and twenty days. Incredible? There was a lot of 'crime' in his family, and he resisted arrest. In that violent and cruel area the carabinieri and the law try to keep well ahead of trouble. Dolci's best known piece of statistical information is that in the district of Partinico the population have between them in their lives spent seven hundred and fifty years in school and more than three thousand years in prison.

This kind of reportage lay to Dolci's hand in the post-war literature of southern Italy. Carlo Levi's *Christ stopped at Eboli* astonished the world with its account of life in an upland village in Lucania—all true, but it was a very skilfully written novelist's account. Lucania again is the scene of Rocco Scotellaro's *Contadini del Sud*, fascinating stories from the mouths of their subjects—they ought to be translated. Francesco Cagnetta, in parts of his *Inchiesta su Orgosolo* seems closest of them all to Dolci; the title is similar, the purpose is sociological, and Orgosolo in the mountains of northern Sardinia is, like Partinico, the haunt of bandits. These writers bring the brutal facts of life in the Mezzogiorno more unforgettably into the mind than volumes of sociological research could, and Dolci has made a more thorough job of it than any of them.

When part of the *Inchiesta* was first published in *Nuovi Argomenti* Dolci again got into trouble with the police. They said his work wasn't art—it was too ugly; it evidently wasn't science; so it must be pornography.

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This brings me to the real significance of Dolci and his work. It is the deep, strong, and sustained protest of a totally committed man against iniquities of commission and omission, much too completely documented for anybody to ignore. It is the human protest of a deeply Christian spirit wedded to the ideas of Gandhi. It is misrepresented by those who regard it as a political protest, although in the long run it must have effect in political action. One hears such wise and judicious comments. 'That man will never get anything done without a national political and economic programme.' No-one knows this better than Danilo; he has said so very often, and at great length in writing. But he is not himself a political figure, and in any case future political solutions cannot excuse anybody from doing what can be done while waiting; besides they will be useless unless the minds of the people are prepared for them. 'Begin with the past' is one of Dolci's principles. He took it from Gandhi—and it makes at least one English educationist uneasy. Or you may hear: 'It is all useless; the population of Sicily increases by thousands a year; birth control is the only solution.' I don't remember his having expressed views on this subject—but he has contributed four children of his own to the total in recent years. Think what you like of this in the story of Ignazio P., rag and bone man, only think about it: In this quarter, he says, 'some have eight children, some six, some ten; it is the one and only delight, to have children. It is the only pleasure of the poor.' That is my own translation. Miss Cummins writes 'making them's our one pleasure.' Perhaps Ignazio meant it that way, but what he *says* is 'having' them. And I would stick to my version in the light of what Gino O., the ex-pickpocket, says: 'Often in the morning, when I get up to go to work, I go to the cot where two of my children are sleeping, and kiss the smallest one; and I think to myself that he at least has the caresses and kisses I never had myself. Even I am useful for something, I think to myself.'

People seem to support Danilo for diametrically opposite reasons—some because they are Christian, some because they are agnostic, some because they are Communist, some because they are Catholic. Their hearts support him, their 'views' are less important. I suppose Danilo's own 'views' are less important too than his totally dedicated life, his deep understanding and pity. 'Before another child dies of hunger,' he wrote on early days at Trappeto, 'I wish to die myself.' And now, it is reported, at Trappeto where his work has been going on for seven years, nobody any longer looks wretched and defeated. Life has begun again, a new light shines, and death claims fewer victories in advance of their due time.

The Carnival will take place

The carnival will take place between sunset and midnight
By order of the controllers.

We have especially chosen the carnival season
That is the carnival month that is the week
That is today this evening bearing in mind
That today the moon sets in the hours of daylight.
Attention please attention.

*I can't hear what they are saying
The speakers are amplifying
Beyond the take of the ordinary ear*

Today the moon sets in the hours of daylight
So that the scheme of artificial lighting
Commissioned by the controllers may be seen
To full effect after the fall of darkness
Without unnatural intrusion. All sources of light
Will thus be under control. All places of shadow
Will also be under control. Attention attention

*Are they talking to us or to others
We do not know about
Are there others we do not know about
Who understand*

Not necessarily midnight as you know it
Not the positions of the sun or moon
Which as we have explained have deliberately been
Eliminated for carnival purposes.
Midnight will be when the controllers determine
According to the number of spokes in the wheel
The number of teeth in the cog. At present unknown.
Except to the engineers. Who are sworn to silence.

*And we—did we ever take an oath of silence
Not knowing what it was
Not knowing what it was*

Attention. Attention. The carnival will take place
On the ground between the power-station and the river.
The area has been enclosed in barbed-wire fencing
For reasons of security and control.
The barbs however have been festooned with bunting
And the river-frontage has recently been shored up.
A word about admission

*Will they be there themselves
Is it for them as well as us
Or will they be somewhere else*

Admission is free but tickets will only be issued
On presentation of your insurance cards
Stamped up to date. We do not want to find
Anyone staying away skulking at home
Or hanging about the streets. If you do not come
It will be assumed that your cards are not in order
And appropriate action will follow. Finally masks

*Did we ever take an oath of obedience
Not knowing what it was
Not knowing what it was*

Masks. You are asked to equip yourselves with and to wear
Masks. The controllers require you to be masked.
The success of the carnival will depend very largely
On choices of mask nothing ingenious or arty
But recognisable masks typical masks.
We must know who you represent but not who you are.
We do not want to know who you really are.

*They only want to know
If our cards are in order*

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